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**Name of Organization:** Great Lakes United

**Type of Organization:** Other

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**Project Title:** Taking Stock of Our Future: An Outreach Tour

**Project Category:** Emerging Issues

**Rank by Organization (if applicable):** 0

**Total Funding Requested (\$):** 25,250 **Project Duration:** 0.5 Years

**Abstract:**

Background:

Impacts of fish stocking on Great Lakes fish and fisheries were discussed during a conference sponsored by Great Lakes United, in December 1999. Represented were state and provincial agencies, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, academia, public interest groups and First Nations. During this first comprehensive scientific examination of stocking, five experts discussed impacts of diseases, loss of genetic diversity, loss of biological integrity, management costs, First Nations' rights, current dependence on stocking, suppression of non-native forage species and reestablishment of top-predators. The fish community objectives (FCOs) for Lakes Superior, Huron and Michigan were examined in breakout sessions. Environmentally appropriate and inappropriate aspects of each lake's current FCOs were identified, and progress in achieving FCOs was critiqued. Stocking practices were assessed in relation to ecological principles identified by the presenters, and recommendations for revising the FCOs and associated management practices were made.

The Tour:

The goal of this program is to facilitate broader stakeholder participation in fishery management decisions with the aim of achieving a more sustainable Great Lakes fishery. The next phase will be the "Taking Stock Tour": organizing presentations throughout the basin to grassroots environmental organizations, tribes, and conservation and angler groups. Abbreviated conference materials will be developed and presented, and FCO revision recommendations will be discussed in the context of the local watershed hosts. Public comment to fisheries management agencies will be outlined and encouraged, and the need for the establishment of a formal public comment opportunity will be stressed.

This Tour is targeted for summer 2000, to address the interest generated from the Taking Stock conference in a timely fashion. We are requesting consideration for support during the summer award cycle.

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**Geographic Areas Affected by the Project**

**States:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illinois	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New York
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indiana	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pennsylvania
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michigan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wisconsin
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minnesota	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ohio

**Lakes:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Superior	<input type="checkbox"/> Erie
<input type="checkbox"/> Huron	<input type="checkbox"/> Ontario
<input type="checkbox"/> Michigan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All Lakes

**Geographic Initiatives:**

☐ Greater Chicago   ☐ NE Ohio   ☐ NW Indiana   ☐ SE Michigan   ☐ Lake St. Clair

**Primary Affected Area of Concern:** Not Applicable

**Other Affected Areas of Concern:**

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***For Habitat Projects Only:***

**Primary Affected Biodiversity Investment Area:** All BIAs

**Other Affected Biodiversity Investment Areas:**

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**Problem Statement:**

Fish stocking in the Great Lakes introduces disease, dilutes native genetic diversity, and introduces a non-native top predator into this freshwater ecosystem. While stocking is used beneficially for restoration efforts, the extensive stocking of non-native fish for sport gaming poses numerous ecological problems. Education of sport clubs and conservation organizations is vital to clarify informed opinions on this issue. This issue is not "to stock or not to stock", but rather, how do we use stocking to move towards a sustainable Great Lakes Fishery?

Additionally, instruction on how, who and when to comment on fisheries management issues is lacking. A formal public comment period is not currently available for public consultation to management decisions.

**Proposed Work Outcome:**

The "Taking Stock Tour" will be a 2 hour presentation hosted by local community groups throughout the basin. There will be ample opportunity for discussion. The first hour will consist of a multi-media presentation on the scientific impacts of fish stocking on the Great Lakes ecosystem, fish and fisheries. The second hour will be discussion on recommendations for changes to a particular lake's Fish Community Objectives; how, who, and when to voice public opinion; and the need to request a formal public comment process. The "Tour" will be presented to community groups throughout the basin, from Minnesota to New York, including Ontario, and will be applicable to all 5 of the Great Lakes. Three groups have already been identified as potential hosts, and up to 10 stops will be made on the "Tour." Additionally, guest experts will be identified to assist in materials presentation and discussion.

From this "Tour", we hope to raise awareness on the impacts of fish stocking, stress the need to move towards a sustainable Great Lakes fishery, protect freshwater biodiversity, and enable public citizens to voice their opinion to members of the Lake Committees and regional fisheries managers.

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**Project Milestones:****Dates:**

Create tour presentation- slideshow

05/2000

Identify host groups

05/2000

Develop tour presentation

06/2000

Schedule host groups

06/2000

Create outreach handout materials

07/2000

Tour

08/2000

Proceedings

09/2000

Follow up

09/2000

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☒ Project Addresses Environmental Justice

**If So, Description of How:**

Currently, there is no opportunity for formal public comment on fisheries management issues. In addition to educating interested community members on what it will take to restore an ecologically sound, sustainable Great Lakes Fisheries, this tour will help empower citizen voices. First Nation/ tribal communities in particular are impacted by the displacement of native fish by stocked populations, as natives like the lake trout and whitefish are important components both of diet and cultural identity.

☒ Project Addresses Education/Outreach

**If So, Description of How:**

The Taking Stock Tour is a public outreach program which will bring materials and speakers to local communities around the Great Lakes. Local groups will host each "mini-conference." Participants will be educated on the Fish Community Objectives. FCOs are the long range ecosystem plans for each lake and define objectives for the structure and function of a particular lake. Lake FCOs will be discussed in the context of whether or not they work towards achieving a sustainable Great Lakes fishery. Evaluations will result in recommendations that participants can then vocalize to Lake Committees and fisheries managers.

A main purpose of this Tour is to spread ecological information on the Great Lakes fishery to environmentalists, conservationists, scientists, sportsfishermen and other stakeholders to create a more sustainable resource.

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**Project Budget:**

	<b>Federal Share Requested (\$)</b>	<b>Applicant's Share (\$)</b>
<b>Personnel:</b>	7,500	5,500
<b>Fringe:</b>	0	0
<b>Travel:</b>	10,000	0
<b>Equipment:</b>	750	0
<b>Supplies:</b>	2,000	0
<b>Contracts:</b>	5,000	0
<b>Construction:</b>	0	0
<b>Other:</b>	0	1,000
<b>Total Direct Costs:</b>	25,250	6,500
<b>Indirect Costs:</b>	0	0
<b>Total:</b>	25,250	6,500
<b>Projected Income:</b>	0	0

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**Funding by Other Organizations (Names, Amounts, Description of Commitments):**

The Habitat and Biodiveristy Task Force funding dedicated to fisheries work, supported by the George Gund Foundation, is aproximately \$5,500.00. This amount is listed under "personnel." Trout Unlimited contributed \$1,000,00 in funds towards the production of a Taking Stock proceedings. This amount is listed under "other".

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**Description of Collaboration/Community Based Support:**

Many groups have expressed interest in hosting a stop of the "Taking Stock Tour" in their community. Already, the Issac Walton League, New York Division and Highlands Conservancy, of Hiram OH, have expressed interest in being tour hosts. Michigan United Conservation Clubs have offered to identify multiple groups within MUCC to host, as well as provide coverage in local media (including public TV, and radio) and pre-tour advertisements. GLU has submitted an abstract to the International Association for Great Lakes Research and will present the Taking Stock conference recommendations for stocking to the scientific community., GLU has been invited to submit a similar abstract to the River Rendezvous 2000 in Kitchner, Ontario, sponsored by Ontario Streams.